

ISSUE 80 Winter 2022

Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

By Anne Abbs

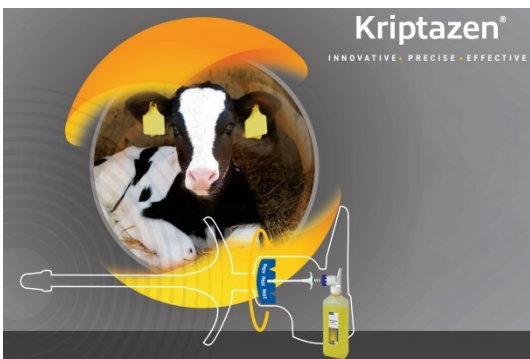


TB Update:

Whilst there have been great strides made in controlling TB in Hotspot 21 and we have now moved to a phase of badger vaccination, there are concerning new developments. There has been a number of confirmed outbreaks further East of the current hotspot particularly around the Ousby area and onto the fellside. Culture from lesions in these cases indicates that these new cases appear to be linked but are a different strain of TB to Hotspot 21. APHA have an intention to create a further Hotspot – at the time of writing the boundaries are yet to be defined. This will not initially increase the level of cattle testing beyond that imposed by any radials around confirmed cases but will look at road kill badgers to check for any wildlife spread.

If you farm anywhere in this area (or indeed anywhere else!), it's well worth requesting a TBAS visit to look at your TB risks and try to reduce your vulnerability to infection. This identifies areas where you can make a difference to your herd risk and consists of 2 visits by a vet from the practice, 6 months apart, and is fully funded i.e. free at the point of delivery. Your obligation is to take action on any identified areas over the 6 month period – this could include costing out improvements.

Please get in touch with the practice if you wish to arrange a TBAS visit.



Halagon Alternative

Kriptazen. For those clients being prescribed Halagon for control of *Cryptosporidium*, we will gradually be replacing this with Kriptazen which has an identical active ingredient however has an improved precision dosing applicator, graduated in 10kg increments,

allowing improved accuracy when dosing to body weight (20kg to 60 kg) due to the narrow safety margin and ill effects due to toxicity. We will provide further details on prescription but please speak to one of our vets if you need further information.

Goats– Disbudding of Goat Kids:

Disbudding is the most common surgical procedure carried out in goats, but there are still regular reports of poor technique resulting in horn spur regrowth or even the death of goat kids.

Why disbud kids

Disbudding is defined as a mutilation under UK law. Not all goats are disbudded; many pygmy goats and Boer goats are kept horned. On the other hand, most dairy kids are routinely disbudded.

In the wild, horns may help protect the goat from smaller predators, assist the regulation of body temperature in hot climates and help individual animals establish dominance within the herd. Horned goats know they have horns and how to use them, which can often damage other goats udders or pose a potential risk to handler's faces and eyes. The RSPCA in their leaflet *An Introduction to Welfare and Ownership of Goats* recommends that horned and hornless goats are not kept together <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/farm/farmanimals/goats>

Disbudding Legislation

In the UK, the disbudding and dehorning of goats can only be undertaken by a vet.

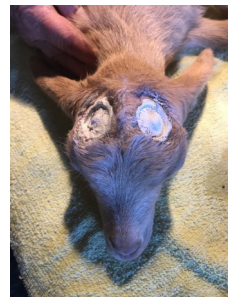
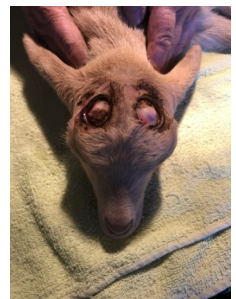
Age at disbudding

Horn buds in kids are much bigger than in calves, so the recommended age for disbudding kids is **2 to 7 days**. At this age the buds are small enough to remove with one application of the disbudding iron. Removing buds in larger / older kids increases risks of complications and regrowth. Goat kids are usually disbudded under general anaesthetic.

By Ben Dustan



If you have goat kids and are likely to want them disbudded, please speak to your vet in good time to ensure they are experienced in goat kid disbudding. Our lead vet at Tarn Farm Vets, part of the Paragon Veterinary Group, is an experienced goat vet and happy to discuss all aspects of goat care, including disbudding. Please contact the Tarn office on 01931 716024



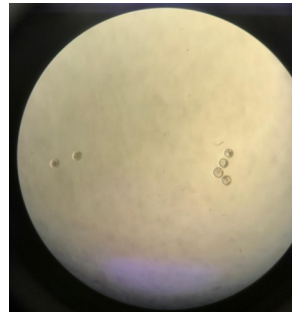
Advanced Breeding Technologies– Past, Present and Future:

It's been less than a hundred years since Artificial Insemination (AI) was first successfully carried out in cattle. Since then it has become a mainstream breeding tool, especially among Dairy and pedigree Beef breeders. The ease with which semen can be moved around the world, allowing a much greater choice of sires than is available through natural service, and the opportunity to use the best bulls available in a biosecure way to

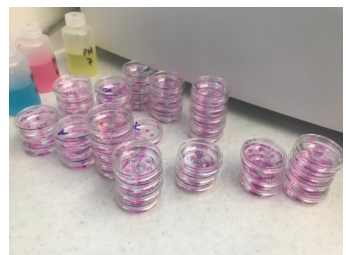


maximise herd improvement has, no doubt, underpinned its success. The bull is only half of the story, however, and whilst getting as many offspring from an outstanding bull is great, there are also many heifers and cows with fantastic potential and only getting one calf a year from them is a great limitation.

'Flushing' cows, and subsequent embryo transfer into recipients was the first method developed to improve the number of offspring a quality heifer or cow could achieve. The first calf was born through embryo transfer in the 1950's, but it wasn't until the 1970's that this became a truly commercial offering. The concept behind it is reasonably simple: hormone injections given to the donor stimulate a group of follicles to develop and ovulate together, meaning a number of oocytes (eggs) are released into the uterus rather than just a single one, as occurs normally in cattle. Insemination (either by a bull or, more commonly, by AI) of these eggs leads to a number of embryos starting to develop. These can be 'flushed' from the uterus after 1 week and either transferred into recipient animals immediately, or frozen to be transported (often globally), or implanted later.



More recently embryos have started to be produced by *in vitro* methods. Similar to IVF in humans, but carried out in normally fertile animals, the oocytes are collected directly from the ovaries through an ultrasound-guided needle in a process called Oocyte PickUp (OPU). These are then fertilised and allowed to grow for a week under highly controlled laboratory conditions until they become embryos suitable for either freezing or transferring.



There are, generally, two methods of doing this. The first is without using drugs and carrying out collections once or twice a week. The second is more controlled, with donors being synchronised, and given low doses of hormones to stimulate follicles to develop before collection, which is carried out fortnightly. This second method leads to better quality embryos and better pregnancy rates, so is our preferred method. IVF is



becoming increasingly popular in Europe, having become well-established in both North and South America in recent years. In fact, in 2017 more embryos were produced by this method than by the more traditional flushing technique. The increasing popularity of IVF over flushing is due to its ability to produce many more embryos over time, reduced use of expensive semen, and the more regular collections allow good donors to produce embryos to a number of different sires in a short space of time. In addition, heifers can be collected at an earlier age, and collections can be carried out in pregnant animals without affecting the pregnancy. IVF can also be used to produce embryos from animals destined for slaughter, a process known as Genetic Recovery.

As IVF success rates continue to improve and the cost to produce an embryo subsequently falls, this is becoming a more popular option for elite breeders and also those looking to achieve rapid herd improvement, especially when coupled with genomic evaluation of their animals. With more embryos being produced and traded, it is likely that more breeders will look to this to bring new genetics safely into their herds, and to produce future generations. Work is currently ongoing to allow for biopsy of embryos, allowing their genomic evaluation prior to transferring, and once this becomes available it will be possible to buy sexed embryos which will have the traits any breeder is looking for, whether they be disease resistance, production potential, liveweight gain etc.

Breeding cattle has always been an exciting industry, and with more options becoming available it will continue to be such. I suspect no-one from the 1930's could have predicted we'd come so far, so who knows where we'll be in another 90 years?

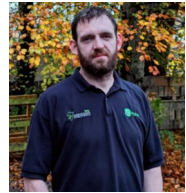


By Rob Simmons

How to Prevent Lameness Through Foot Trimming:

Here at Paragon we believe a healthy cow is a happy cow but we all know it is not that simple. One key factor is HOOFCARE!

Here at Paragon, Peter Cullen has 5 years foot trimming experience and is dedicated to preventing lameness having completed a level 4 CHCSB course



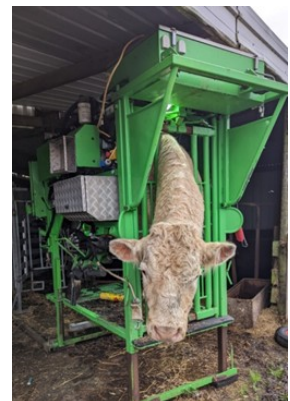
By Peter Cullen

Foot trimming is a therapeutic measure and there are a few key factors that farmers can also do to prevent lameness which together can reduce lameness within the herd.

- FOOTBATH (Regular footbaths are a must)
- BEDDING (Comfort is key to maximise good rest for your cattle)
- AVOID OVER CROWDED SHEDS
- INSTALL RUBBER MATS (tight corners, feed barriers etc)
- MINIMISE MILKING TIME (how long are they on their feet, how much rest between milking etc)
- REGULAR CATTLE LAMNESS SCORING- this is proving very successful in curing lameness.
- 60 day trim AFTER calving. (Previously 100 days, at 60 days bruising will begin)



We provide a fully integrated foot care service and can provide bespoke farm foot trimming. Please discuss with your routine vet , our Foot Trimmer-Peter Cullen **07786712704** or contact the practice for more information.





Flock Health Club

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Tailored advice on sheep productivity, health and welfare.
- Annual health plan review
- 6 faecal counts/year
- 4 group meetings/year
- 50% off visit fees for pre-booked routine work
- 30 minutes of vet time for proactive health planning reasons such as blood sampling or disease investigation



All for a membership cost
of £20/month

Group open to all Flock Owners

Dalston 01228 710208
Newbiggin 01768 483789
Tarn Farm Vets 01931 716024

Calf Health Club Launch

We are excited to announce the launch of our new Calf Health Club.

If you are interested in improving your calf rearing or just keen to have more youngstock focused Vet and Vet Tech involvement then come along to the meeting on the 26th January, 12.15pm @ The Dalston Practice to find out how we can help your calves (and you!)



Mastering Medicines Course

We anticipate holding another Red Tractor Assured Mastering Medicines Course this Spring subject to interest. Please contact the practice if you would like to attend.



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